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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 2nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 5 October 2005 at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Aliyev ..... (Azerbaijan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 26: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/60/23 and A/60/116)

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Agenda item 37: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/60/67)

1. **The Chairman** recalled that the cause of decolonization had been one of the defining issues of the latter part of the twentieth century. Due to the untiring efforts of the United Nations, most of the world's population was no longer under colonial rule. Nevertheless, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the United Nations list, and he stressed the importance of completing the task of decolonization in the shortest possible time.

2. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in his capacity as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, introduced the Special Committee's report (A/60/23), which provided detailed information on the Committee's activities and projections for its future work as well as recommendations in the form of draft resolutions. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/146, the Special Committee had conducted a midpoint review of the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In that context he drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (A/60/71 and Add.1).

3. During 2005 the Special Committee had continued to analyse developments in the 16 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. During its regular session in June 2005 as well as during the Caribbean seminar in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Special Committee had benefited from the participation of representatives from Non-Self-Governing Territories, administering Powers and non-governmental organizations, and of experts. In its report, the Special Committee stressed that the role of the administering Powers in ensuring progress towards decolonization could not be underestimated and noted the exemplary cooperation of New Zealand with regard to the self-determination of Tokelau and the continuing informal working relationships of the United Kingdom and the United States of America with the Committee. It also underlined the importance of visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories as a means of providing and collecting information on the decolonization process. In that context, he drew attention to the report of the United Nations Special Mission to Bermuda contained in document A/AC.109/2005/19.

4. **Mr. Hunte** (Saint Lucia), speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, recalled that 2005 was the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and that the principle of self-determination of peoples had been reaffirmed by world leaders in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (A/60/L.1). During 2005 the Special Committee had stressed the urgent need for the United Nations system to move into the implementation phase of self-determination and decolonization. The support of the United Nations had been critical in achieving independence for many current Member States. That same support must be provided to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories; accordingly, the resolutions adopted by the Special Committee set out achievable goals with the overall aim of assisting those Territories in achieving full self-government.

5. The Special Committee had taken a proactive approach to its mandate, undertaking a United Nations Special Mission to Bermuda in spring to engage in an interactive dialogue with the Bermudian people on

independence and on the potential role the United Nations could play in their development process. The 2005 Caribbean regional seminar had been held in Canouan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in May 2005 to discuss the situation in the various Territories with representatives of their peoples. Key recommendations for the future work of the United Nations in the self-determination and decolonization process had been adopted at that seminar and had been reflected in the resolutions proposed by the Special Committee.

6. He underscored the important role played by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations in assisting the Non-Self-Governing Territories to develop their capacity to assume the responsibilities of self-government. That was in keeping with Article 73 *b* of the Charter of the United Nations on the development of self-government, which was a responsibility of both Governments and the United Nations system. He therefore welcomed the successful integration of many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories into the work of several United Nations bodies, which was helping to strengthen the territories' administrative and human resource capacity and contributing to their social, economic and political development. The Special Committee looked forward to cooperating with the Economic and Social Council to identify means of ensuring further integration of the Territories into the work of the United Nations technical bodies, including the Committees of the Council.

7. The Special Committee had benefited greatly from hearing the perspective of numerous government and non-government representatives from the Territories, some of whom would also be addressing the Committee. The Special Committee had, for example, heard the views of the elected leadership of Tokelau where, in cooperation with the administering Power, New Zealand, a detailed workplan was contributing significantly to the decolonization process. A similar workplan for the remaining Territories, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions, would accelerate the decolonization process elsewhere. He therefore strongly encouraged the other administering Powers to return to formal cooperation with the Special Committee. A true interactive dialogue would benefit all concerned, especially the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Active participation by the administering Powers would accelerate the decolonization process and better prepare the peoples of the Territories to make informed decisions on their political future, in accordance with human rights instruments and Article 73, paragraph b and a of the Charter of the United Nations.

8. The entire United Nations system shared the responsibility for decolonization; accordingly, a plan for the wider United Nations system had been developed to ensure the implementation of long-standing directives with a view to achieving decolonization by 2010. Areas where independent expertise was crucial if decolonization were to become a reality had been identified. That proactive approach must be carried forward into 2006 in order to achieve full decolonization by 2010. By focusing its efforts on implementation, the Special Committee had created a new dynamic and he was sure that, with the support of Member States, the challenge of implementation could be met.

9. **Mr. Williams** (United Kingdom) said the consultation process between his Government and its 10 overseas territories was continuing. The seventh annual meeting of the Overseas Territories Consultative Council would be held in London in October 2005. The Council provided a forum for dialogue between democratically elected chief ministers and their equivalents from the Territories and United Kingdom Government Ministers on a range of issues including the relationship between the United Kingdom and its overseas Territories, constitutional modernization, good governance, environmental matters and the United Kingdom's international obligations.

10. His Government welcomed the progress that was being made in the constitutional review process; there had been useful discussions between his Government and representatives of Gibraltar, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands. In Saint Helena, a consultative poll had rejected a revised draft constitution and that Territory was currently considering its next steps. Extensive discussions had been held with the Independence Commission set up in Bermuda to look into the implications of any move towards independence; at the Commission's request, his Government had drafted a paper setting out its position on a number of issues, which was currently being studied by the Government of Bermuda.

11. His Government continued to support capacity-building projects and to promote sustainable development and good governance in its overseas Territories. The Overseas Territories Environment Programme continued to support the implementation of the environment charters for the overseas Territories. His Government likewise continued to support its overseas Territories in their efforts to strengthen relations with the European Commission and to improve access to the trade and economic and developmental aid provisions of the European Union — Overseas Countries and Territories (EU — OCT) Overseas Association Decision. It had also continued its informal cooperation with the Special Committee; in that context a visit had been made to Bermuda with a view to consider progress towards that Territory's delisting.

12. **Mr. Xie** Yunliang (China) said that helping colonial countries and peoples exercise their right to self-determination had been one of the cardinal goals and greatest successes of the United Nations in its 60-year history. The historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had accelerated decolonization across the world, yet 2 million people still lived in 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The declaration by the General Assembly of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had reflected the common aspiration of Member States for an early conclusion of the decolonization process.

13. Member States had a duty to help the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration. He stressed the role played by the Committee in that regard and underscored the need for closer cooperation between the administering Powers and the United Nations. Given that most of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were small and had very fragile development environments, he called on the administering Powers to take effective measures to promote their economic, social, cultural and educational development while at the same time protecting natural and human resources.

14. **Ms. Mujuma** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that it was the duty of Member States to facilitate the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories by redoubling their efforts on a case-by-case basis. Regional seminars continued to create an understanding among the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the options for self-determination. The 2005 Caribbean Regional Seminar had been a success; her delegation encouraged the continuation of such seminars. Visiting Missions remained an important mechanism for consultations and the dissemination of information, and her delegation appealed to the administering Powers to cooperate with them. Dissemination of information on decolonization was equally vital; the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information had been doing a commendable job. Specialized agencies and organizations should be encouraged to further assist those Territories in the economic and social sectors.

15. The question of Western Sahara could be resolved only on the basis of the inalienable rights of the Saharan people to self-determination. Sadly, the situation remained critical. Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, signatories to the agreement reached with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), had both violated the ceasefire, further complicating the situation. The two parties should urgently implement the Baker Plan. Continued violations of human rights were of concern and her delegation urged both the Saharan Government and Morocco to release all prisoners of war and political prisoners. The appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara was a hopeful step towards resuscitating the stalled negotiating process.

16. All options for self-determination of the Territories were valid as long as they conformed with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The task of ensuring the independence of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories would be difficult without practical support from administering Powers, the international community and institutions at large.

17. **Ms. Núñez Mordoche** (Cuba) said that although the United Nations had always considered the decolonization process among its main achievements, progress had unfortunately been very limited in recent years. Indeed, during the preparation of the final document for the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, fundamental rights such as the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, and even the very existence of the Fourth Committee, had been called into question.

18. Some administering Powers refused to seek a definitive solution to colonialism, citing the alleged inability of Non-Self-Governing Territories to maintain an independent and sustainable society and still refused to cooperate fully with the Special Committee, even attempting to delist their colonies without adequately informing inhabitants of the various options for self-determination. Her delegation reiterated that delisting Territories must be part of a process of real decolonization, in which the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories were afforded full guarantees and all the necessary information to reach an outcome based on a transparent and just decision.

19. In that context, visiting missions were of paramount importance in collecting information on the living conditions of the inhabitants of such Territories, as well as in disseminating information on their options for self-determination. For example, the special mission to Bermuda in 2005 had provided member States with first-hand insight into the real problems of that Territory and their influence on the self-determination process. Similar visits had helped lead to the pending resolution of the Tokelau case. Cuba wished to acknowledge New Zealand's cooperative and open stance and urged other administering Powers to follow that example. Cuba was, however, concerned about the continuing looting and overexploitation of the land and sea resources of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

20. Decolonization must remain a priority for the United Nations. Regional seminars were vital and should be complemented by dissemination of their outcomes on the Internet and through the mass media of Member States. Furthermore, more developed Member States should make a greater contribution to the provision of educational and training opportunities for the youth of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

21. A number of resolutions had been adopted recognizing the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, including the resolution submitted by Cuba in June 2005 to the Special Committee. Still pending however, were the decontamination of the island of Vieques and the devolution of a former shooting range to the local authorities.

22. The stalemate in the Western Sahara was of grave concern; the only feasible way to reach an honourable solution would be to hold a fair and transparent referendum under the aegis of the United Nations. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and demanded firm action from the United Nations. It also reiterated its unqualified support to the legitimate rights of Argentina in the dispute over the Malvinas Islands and called for the continuation of dialogue and cooperation between the parties with a view to a just, peaceful and honourable solution. Her delegation urged the administering Power for Guam to cooperate fully with the Committee and respect the inalienable rights and genuine interests of the inhabitants of the Territory.

23. **Mr. Mcivor** (New Zealand) recalled that in June 2005, the Administrator of Tokelau had reported to the Special Committee that work was under way on a constitution and a treaty of free association with New Zealand, that measures to strengthen Tokelau's infrastructure continued apace, and that New Zealand had announced an additional contribution of NZ$ 7.5 million to the Tokelau International Trust Fund. Tokelau continued to move steadily towards a decision on self-government. In August 2005, the General Fono had agreed to hold a referendum on self-government, enacted a set of rules for the referendum, and authorized the Council for Ongoing Government to negotiate a final draft of the treaty.

24. The next step was to put the draft treaty and supporting documents before the New Zealand cabinet. Following approval, Tokelau's Referendum Commission would set the dates for the referendum, which was expected to be held in November 2005. Should the outcome be in favour of self-government, the treaty and relevant legislative amendments would then proceed through the New Zealand parliamentary process, it was expected that Tokelau could become self-governing in the second quarter of 2006.

25. Preparations were already under way in Tokelau for the referendum, including voter registration. Under the referendum, Tokelau would become a self-governing State in free association with New Zealand on the basis of the constitution and the treaty. Provision had been made for the United Nations to monitor the referendum and a formal request would be forthcoming. Meanwhile, the draft treaty and constitution were being circulated around Tokelau for further discussion. The Office of the Administrator had recently published and distributed a booklet describing Tokelau's move towards self-government and inviting other countries and international organizations to

contribute to the Tokelau International Trust Fund. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had agreed to organize a donors' round table in New York. Tokelau had begun discussions on accession to the Cotonou Agreement and Associate Membership of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, Tokelau would be admitted as an Observer to the Pacific Islands Forum at its next meeting.

26. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) recalled that, at the World Summit in September 2005, world leaders had rededicated themselves to upholding the right to self-determination of all peoples. Nevertheless, some Non-Self-Governing Territories had yet to exercise that right and a progress review was very much in order. Clearly, the unfinished agenda of decolonization could be completed only through effective implementation of the Plan of Action for the International Decade, which required action and cooperation by the peoples of the Territories, the administering Powers, the international community and the United Nations system as a whole. Pakistan welcomed the intention of the Special Committee to develop accelerated action plans for the decolonization of certain Territories. The administering Powers must cooperate with the United Nations and the Special Committee to ensure full implementation of the Declaration on a case-by-case basis and to create conditions in the Territories that would enable their inhabitants to exercise freely their inalienable right to self-determination. They must also allow representatives of the Territories concerned to participate in discussions of the Special Committee and the Committee. Specialized agencies and international institutions should also increase their assistance to the Territories. Moreover, it was vital that the peoples of the Territories receive information on United Nations activities and programmes as well as available options regarding their political status. Visiting missions to the Territories and regional seminars also furthered decolonization objectives.

27. Pakistan believed that there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination in the process of decolonization. His country welcomed the cooperation between New Zealand and Tokelau and the developments in New Caledonia since the signing of the 1998 Noumea Accord. He encouraged concerned parties in the case of Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and Gibraltar to undertake negotiations to find peaceful and definitive solutions. With regard to the Western Sahara, Pakistan supported a negotiated peaceful settlement that provided for self-determination.

28. The guiding principles of the Declaration must continue to drive implementation of the decolonization agenda and should not be limited to the issue of Non-Self-Governing Territories but ensure that all peoples under colonial administration or foreign occupation were allowed to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. In that respect, Pakistan continued to support the just struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination, freedom and peace, and expressed hope for peace for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their legitimate quest for self-determination. It was essential to find a just solution acceptable to Pakistan, India and, above all, the people of Kashmir. Pakistan reiterated its commitment to the "Composite Dialogue" with India in the interest of achieving peace and prosperity in the region.

29. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa) said that his delegation attached great importance to the issue of decolonization and commended the Special Committee on its work in addressing the plight of those who still lived under colonial domination and foreign occupation.

30. His delegation was concerned that the Saharan people still could not exercise their right to self-determination. The Peace Plan provided a fair way of addressing the matter; however, the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/116) demonstrated that the tireless efforts to try to resolve the impasse had yet to be successful. Although his Government was pleased that the Frente POLISARIO had maintained its support for the Peace Plan, it was concerned that the Kingdom of Morocco had yet to reciprocate and accept the Plan unconditionally. His delegation called on both the Government of Morocco and the Saharan people, represented by the Frente POLISARIO, to redouble their efforts to find a way out of the deadlock.

31. His delegation was encouraged by other developments, including the successful implementation of the first phase of the exchange of family visits programme and the establishment of telephone links between Tindouf and Western Sahara. His Government commended the Frente POLISARIO for its recent release of the remaining Moroccan political prisoners with a view to resolving the impasse and hoped that the Kingdom of Morocco would reciprocate by releasing the remaining Saharan prisoners. The allegation by

Amnesty International that some Saharan human rights defenders had been arrested and tortured in Moroccan jails was a matter of grave concern.

32. His delegation commended the role played by MINURSO under difficult circumstances to enforce the ceasefire agreement and finalize the identification process. It agreed with the Secretary-General that reducing the size of MINURSO would not be advisable at the current stage. It encouraged the parties to work with the Special Envoy and Special Representative of the Secretary-General to resolve their differences. A free and fair referendum conducted by the United Nations was the only way to ensure that the Saharan people could exercise their fundamental right to choose their own destiny.

33. **Mr. Navoti** (Fiji) said that his delegation agreed that it was crucial for the United Nations to redouble its efforts to accelerate the decolonization process in the remaining Territories. Territorial size, geographical isolation and limited resources should not affect the inalienable right of the peoples of those Territories to self-determination. It was the responsibility of the administering Power to create conditions in those Territories that would enable their people to exercise freely and without interference that alienable right. His delegation therefore commended the efforts of New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France to provide relevant information pursuant to Article 73 *e* of the Charter. Formal and informal contacts between the Special Committee and the administering Powers must be continued.

34. His delegation continued to support the dispatch of visiting missions to the Territories and called on the administering Powers to cooperate fully with them. Regional seminars had also served as an effective forum for discussion of issues of concern to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and afforded the representatives of those Territories opportunities to present their views and recommendations to the Special Committee. Fiji supported the continuation of annual regional seminars held alternately in the Caribbean and Pacific regions and would like to see more vigorous efforts to implement their outcomes.

35. Fiji continued to support the Peace Plan for Western Sahara and noted with appreciation the successful implementation of the first phase of the exchange of family visits programme. It supported the Secretary-General's assessment that reducing the size of MINURSO would not be advisable at the current stage and encouraged the Secretary-General and the Security Council to remain resolute in helping the parties to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

36. Fiji welcomed the continued assistance rendered by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations to Non-Self-Governing Territories. It commended the 58 Member States listed in document A/60/67 which had offered scholarships to inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular Australia, Malaysia, Portugal, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the Holy See.

37. His Government acknowledged the efforts of New Zealand to help Tokelau to take its place among the self-governing and independent nations of the Pacific. Civil service reforms and the establishment of the Tokelau International Trust Fund provided a mechanism by which regional and international bodies and other countries could assist Tokelau to move towards full self-government. It also noted with appreciation the continued progress made by the Kanak people in New Caledonia under the Matignon and the Nouméa Accords and commended France on its efforts to promote economic, social and cultural development in the Territory.

38. **Mr. Mayoral** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Rio Group reaffirmed its support for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and called upon the administering Powers to adopt the necessary measures for the decolonization of each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, taking into account their particular characteristics. The Rio Group firmly supported the activities carried out by the Special Committee, in particular the annual assessment of the political, economic and social situation in each of the Territories, the holding of seminars in the Pacific and the Caribbean regions, the visiting missions and the annual recommendations put forward to the General Assembly. It also welcomed the Special Committee's report (A/60/23) and believed that it was essential for the administering Powers and interested States to implement the report's recommendations without delay.

39. The Rio Group considered it necessary for the Governments of the Argentine Republic and of the

United Kingdom to resume negotiations to find a peaceful, just and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute relating to the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas in accordance with the relevant resolutions and declarations of the General Assembly, the Special Committee and the Organization of American States.

40. The Rio Group welcomed the 2005 Caribbean Regional Seminar and urged that the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar be implemented without delay. The Group also noted the progress made by Tokelau; it drew attention to the cooperation and collaboration provided by New Zealand as administering Power and invited others to follow suit. With regard to the small island Territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific, the international community must facilitate the sustainable growth of their economies in order to advance the decolonization process according to the wishes of their peoples.

41. Concerning Western Sahara, the Rio Group reaffirmed the responsibility of the United Nations for ensuring the exercise by the Saharan people of their right to self-determination through a just, mutually acceptable and lasting solution. The decision by the Frente POLISARIO to release the last group of Moroccan war prisoners was an important step forward. The Rio Group fully supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to Western Sahara to find such a solution concerning the Territory and called on the parties to cooperate with the United Nations and with each other to put an end to the current deadlock.

42. **Mr. Adel** (Egypt) said that the United Nations was called upon to assist the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in exercising their right to self-determination and to support peoples under foreign occupation in their legitimate efforts to gain their independence and freedom. That required increased awareness of the decolonization activities of the United Nations, including the work of the Special Committee, which had taken a leading role in determining the best available methods to enable these peoples to exercise their rights in accordance with international law and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. There was also a need to increase the effectiveness of visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories, as such missions were considered the most effective means of fostering decolonization. Consultations should continue between the Committee and the administering Powers of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to codify the status of all such missions and help them to achieve their objectives.

43. The administering Powers were responsible for providing the Special Committee and the Secretary-General with comprehensive information on political, economic and legal developments in the Territories. The international community, for its part, had a responsibility to safeguard the inalienable rights of colonial peoples to benefit from their natural resources and defend them from misuse and exploitation of such resources by administering Powers or any other Powers. It must also support colonial peoples in their efforts at capacity-building and protecting their cultural heritage. Because sustainable development was often complicated by the unfavourable geographical or climatic conditions of many Non-Self-Governing Territories, the United Nations and its specialized agencies had a particularly important role to play in planning and implementing economic and social development projects as well as building capacity to deal with natural disasters and providing basic services, education and vocational training and communications.

44. Lastly, it was important to continue to conduct seminars and workshops on the various aspects of the decolonization process. His delegation urged the administering Powers to interact more closely with the Special Committee to further that process. That Committee, in turn, must ensure that it had the proper machinery to follow up and monitor progress towards decolonization.

45. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the United Nations should endeavour to maintain the issue of decolonization as one of the priority items on its agenda. One of its most remarkable achievements had been to help millions of people under colonization attain their right of self-determination and gain independence. However, the goals of decolonization could not be fully met as long as people were still living in Non-Self-Governing Territories. In the context of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Special Committee should intensify its efforts to bring a speedy end to colonialism. To make its work more effective, the Committee needed an official and respectful relationship with the administering Powers.

46. People living under colonial rule were entitled to choose freely their political system and not have it imposed upon them by the administering Powers. It was essential to raise their awareness about their right to self-determination as well as the consequences of any option they might select. They needed to be able to decide freely about their future in full knowledge of the facts and enjoy access to the necessary information through modern communications technology; that was a responsibility of the administering Powers. The flow of information would enable the people to know which stage of the decolonization process they had reached, and what they should do to reach their final goals.

47. Visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing-Territories were of vital importance to compile first-hand information on the living conditions and aspirations of the people living there, with a view to expediting the decolonization process. To that end, the Special Committee should continue to seek the formal and timely cooperation of the administering Powers. Delay by administering Powers in submitting information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter could hinder the process of decolonization.

48. His delegation believed that, in specific cases, such as sovereignty disputes, bilateral negotiations should be seriously considered as a viable way forward; they were far preferable to any unilateral action. In those Territories in which people were living under exploitation and domination and were being treated as second-class citizens, the Committee and the General Assembly should listen carefully to their representations and respond appropriately to their requests. A further source of concern was military installations and activities of some administering Powers in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The interests of the people must be duly taken into account and their views fully respected by the administering Powers. Moreover, it was the solemn obligation of the administrative Powers of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to promote the political, economic and social and educational advancement of their inhabitants.

49. **Ms. Hughes Ferrari** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM fully endorsed the resolutions contained in the report of the Special Committee (A/60/23). The Special Committee was spearheading a proactive approach towards the implementation by the wider United Nations system of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, a step welcomed by CARICOM as 7 of the 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories were in the Caribbean region.

50. CARICOM continued to promote the integration of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories into the Community and other regional and international organizations as that engagement prepared them for assuming full self-government. It endorsed the development of modalities for their participation in programmes and activities of the Economic and Social Council, as a natural evolution of their process of self-determination. Their elevation from political dependency to full self-government was fundamental to the regional integration process.

51. A serious obstacle to the achievement of self-determination was the lack of information available to the Territories and Member States. Many people in the Territories remained, to a great extent, unaware of the legitimate political options available to them; while information provided to Member States through official United Nations reports did not provide the necessary insight into the dynamics of contemporary dependency arrangements. Much of the information deficit could be attributed to a failure to implement successive plans of action of the International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism. The midterm review of the Second International Decade had revealed a serious information deficit. Visiting missions, such as that undertaken to Bermuda in 2005, could help bridge that deficit, and should be expanded.

52. CARICOM was of the opinion that the mandate of the Special Committee could be successfully carried out only if there was a concerted effort by the international community to implement the actions upon which it had agreed. It could not accept the removal of international oversight of any given Territory through premature removal from the United Nations list. Success of the work of the United Nations should not be judged by how many — and how quickly — Territories were de-listed, but by whether a Territory had, in fact, achieved a full measure of self-government.

53. CARICOM reaffirmed its support for the early achievement of self-determination by the people of Western Sahara; it reiterated its call for the full implementation of the Peace Plan and expressed concern at the continued political deadlock which could cause increased instability in the region.

54. CARICOM conveyed its appreciation to UNDP, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other bodies for consistently providing assistance to the Territories. In past sessions, the draft resolution concerning the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations had carried a number of abstentions in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council because of concerns that the General Assembly did not have the authority to make such a request to a specialized agency. However, that request was not inconsistent with established practice as numerous resolutions adopted by consensus contained requests to specialized agencies.

55. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that it was regrettable that, half way through the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, only a few Territories were able to look forward to self-determination in the near future. However, he wished to acknowledge the continuing cooperation of the United Kingdom, France, the United States of America and New Zealand as administering Powers.

56. The case of Tokelau, as it made real and steady progress towards self-determination, with the help of New Zealand, the administering Power, was a reminder that the work of the Committee could bear fruit if all its members worked together in a true spirit of cooperation and goodwill. Tokelau would be granted observer status at the forthcoming Pacific Leaders' Summit in Papua New Guinea in October 2005; he was gratified that history would record that the granting of observer status had taken place in Papua New Guinea. It was to be hoped that Tokelau would become a beacon for other Territories and administering Powers.

57. His delegation fully supported the emphasis on implementation of the Plan of Action. It welcomed the progress made in Bermuda.

58. **Mr. Williams** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he was responding to remarks made by the Permanent Representative of Argentina and the representatives of Cuba and Pakistan on the issue of sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom's position on that issue was well known and had last been set out in detail by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations in a written right of reply to the statement made by the President of Argentina at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on 14 September 2005. The United Kingdom had no doubts about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. There could be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the islanders so wished.

59. His delegation reserved its right of reply to comments made about Gibraltar at a later date.

Requests for hearings

60. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to grant the request for hearings relating to the question of Gibraltar in document A/C.4/60/2.

61. *It was so decided.*

62. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to grant the requests for hearings relating to the question of Guam contained in documents A/C.4/60/3 and Add.1.

63. *It was so decided.*

64. The Chairman said that he took it that the Committee wished to grant the request for hearings relating to the question of New Caledonia contained in document A/C.4/60/4.

65. *It was so decided.*

66. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to grant the requests for hearings relating to the question of Western Sahara contained in documents A/C.4/60/5 and Addenda 1 to 44.

67. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.